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THE DECADENCE OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN STOCK. A STATISTICAL STUDY OF GENEALOGICAL RECORDS.

BY FREDERICK S. CRUM.

In 1905, Mr. Frank N. Hagar wrote a book entitled "The American Family," and in his search for the bond of family unity—the tie which binds human couples together when all or most other bonds are withdrawn—he found it in the child.

Couples alone with this tie need all the possible stimulating of otherwise conjugal love, the obligations, the imprecations of conscience and of society—perhaps the fear of the law, to hold them firm . . . where children are feared, eschewed, or avoided, the deadly seeds of family discord are ever ready to spring up, take root and cause the decay of family unity. When among any people a general practice of child prevention becomes prevalent, that deadly ax has cut the very tap-root of the family, of its unity, its life, its persistence, and with it the life and persistence of that people and its institutions.

Again, in an earlier chapter entitled "Decadence of Northern Yankees," Mr. Hagar stated as follows:

There seems to be one central cause that strikes at the family that is nurtured here, and which the foreigner reared abroad has escaped:—it is a theory that ignores reproduction, that violates the principles of love and domestic association, and that began more obviously in fearing childhood and avoiding parenthood.

As early as 1897 I became interested in the problem with which this nation is confronted in the appalling decrease in the birth-rate of its native stock—the descendants of the founders and builders of this great Republic. An investigation made at that time into the birth-rate of Massachusetts during the period 1850 to 1890 revealed only too clearly the decline in the birth-rate of that commonwealth, and the phenomenon was particularly noticeable in the native element of the population. That investigation only confirmed the results of previous inquiries and notably that instituted in the Massachusetts State Census of 1885 whereby it was shown that 20.2 per cent. of the native married women were without

children as against 13.3 per cent. of the married women of foreign birth. Again, that census of 1885 showed the average number of children living per each native married woman to have been 1.92, against 3.01 for the married women of foreign birth.

Other careful investigators of the subject, including R. R. Kuczynski* in 1901 and 1902, Allyn A. Young† in 1905, and Frederick L. Hoffman‡ in 1909, all interpret the best available data in the same way and all arrive at the same general conclusion, namely, that the native element is failing to contribute anything like its proper quota to the new population of this country.

Not satisfied with the limited data of determining value available in the census and registration reports, I have made a statistical analysis of twenty-two genealogical records of pioneer families which originally settled in New England or the middle Atlantic states. The results of this inquiry confirm all the direst forebodings of those who have preached most strenuously against race suicide. The results briefly set forth in the following table may be considered absolutely reliable and representative of the true state of affairs in the native element of the population north of the Mason and Dixon line.

TABLE I.
AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER WIFE.
(Statistics Based upon Twenty-two Genealogical Records* of American Families.)

Marriage Periods.	Number of Wives.	Number of Children.	Average Number of Children per Wife.
Previous to 1700.....	276	2,034	7.37
1700-1749.....	802	5,478	6.83
1750-1799.....	1,966	12,649	6.43
1800-1849.....	5,530	27,320	4.94
1850-1869.....	3,062	10,630	3.47
1870-1879.....	1,086	3,004	2.77
Totals.....	12,722	61,115	4.80

* Only carefully edited genealogical records were used.

This table reveals most clearly the decadence of the original stock which with almost boundless energy "cleared the forests,

* The Fecundity of the Native and Foreign-Born Population in Massachusetts. The Quar. Jour. of Economics., Nov., 1901 and Feb., 1902.

† The Birth-Rate in New Hampshire. Quarterly Publications of the Am. Stat. Assn., Sept., 1905.

‡ The Decline in the Birth-Rate. The North American Review, May, 1909. Maternity Statistics of the State of Rhode Island, State Census of 1905. Proceedings of the First International Eugenics Congress, London, 1912.

gleaned the uneven fields from the glacial stone drift, built in quick time their homely cabins, and moving from tract to tract like a collective array of nature's life, even as the animals and plants, spread with their increasing sons and daughters." Continuing, Mr. Hagar truly says: "They would have laughed to scorn at the modern task of doing so simple a thing as to raise a child. Their women in addition to the work of their large families, and of ordinary housekeeping without modern improvements, performed nearly all the labor that is now done in factories and shops in fitting raw material for use as clothing and food." An average per wife of 7.37 children in the seventeenth century, was 4.60 more than for wives of their descendants married during the ten years, 1870 to 1879! Later data are difficult to secure in sufficient number to be reliable, for at least thirty years must be allowed from the date of the marriage to the closing of the record of the children resulting therefrom.

It goes without saying that a reduction in the average number of children per wife from 7.37 to 2.77 has not been fully offset by reduced infant mortality. There is fragmentary evidence, too, in census returns and other sources, that the present-day average number of children in *completed* American families is considerably less than 2.77 per wife. In fact, it is very doubtful if the present-day average is as high as two children per native American wife. Comment upon this condition of affairs is unnecessary at this time except that it may be stated that the facts available in the most reliable sources seem to indicate that the native American stock has reached the point where it is failing to maintain itself, that is, its births are quite certainly fewer than its deaths at the present time.

If the seventeenth century average had prevailed in the 1,086 families reported for 1870-1879, they would have produced 4,996 more children than were actually recorded. In the eighteenth century, the size of the family was fully sufficient to populate a new country in a normal way. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the decline in the birth-rate of the native stock has been so rapid as to preclude any conclusion other than that it has been deliberate

and largely the result of selfish motives. Such evidence as is available from the most recently compiled genealogies and from such external evidence as must be obvious to all careful observers of present-day conditions, it is quite clear that when sufficient data are available for marriages subsequent to 1880, the average number of children per native wife will be found to have fallen to at most two, and probably less.

Genealogical records, however, do not tell the whole story. There are fewer marriages in proportion to the persons of marriageable age than in the early days and there are more childless wives, some of whom are almost necessarily omitted from statistics based upon genealogical records.

Every careful observer of present-day tendencies has noted and many have commented upon the fact that childless marriages, particularly among Americans of native stock, appear to be, proportionately to the total married women of that stock, rapidly increasing. The following brief summary of the 12,722 wives included in this genealogical investigation is of exceptional interest:

TABLE II.
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDLESS WIVES.
Statistics of 12,722 Wives included in Twenty-two Genealogical Records.

Period.	Total Number of Wives.	Childless Wives.	
		Number.	Per cent. of Total
Previous to 1700.....	276	5	1.81
1700-1749.....	802	14	1.74
1750-1799.....	1,966	37	1.88
1800-1849.....	5,530	225	4.07
1850-1869.....	3,062	181	5.91
1870-1879.....	1,086	88	8.10

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries less than 2 per cent. of the wives were childless; in the first half of the nineteenth century the proportion jumped to over 4 per cent., and this latter figure had doubled by 1870 to 1879. In census and other sources there is evidence that at present there is a far larger proportion of childless wives among the native American women than is indicated by the statistics here presented for the decade 1870 to 1879.

Closely related to the subject of childless wives is that of the number of children borne by the mothers. The following summary table brings out some significant facts:

TABLE III.
COMPARATIVE FECUNDITY OF NATIVE AMERICAN MOTHERS.
Statistics of 12,172 Mothers included in Twenty-two Genealogical Records.

Period.	Mothers with only One Child.		Mothers with only Two Children.		Mothers with Three to Five Children.		Mothers with Six to Nine Children.		Mothers with Ten or More Children.	
	Num-ber.	Per Cent. of Total Wives.	Num-ber.	Per Cent. of Total Wives.	Num-ber.	Per Cent. of Total Wives.	Num-ber.	Per Cent. of Total Wives.	Num-ber.	Per Cent. of Total Wives.
Previous to 1700. . . .	5	1.81	11	4.00	49	17.76	139	50.36	67	24.27
1700-1749. . .	33	4.11	56	6.98	176	21.95	344	42.89	179	22.32
1750-1799. . .	98	4.98	118	6.00	531	17.01	796	40.50	386	19.63
1800-1849. . .	440	7.96	657	11.88	2,088	37.75	1,613	29.17	507	9.17
1850-1869. . .	428	13.98	625	20.41	1,275	41.64	481	15.71	72	2.36
1870-1879. . .	202	18.60	265	24.40	434	39.96	93	8.57	4	0.37

These statistics make it very clear that the wives of native Americans are not only remaining childless in increasingly large numbers, but that a rapidly increasing proportion are electing to bear not more than one child, two children, or three children. As a necessary corollary the number of native American wives who elect to bear large families of from six to nine children, and ten or more children, are becoming extremely rare. This summer at a boarding-house where several families were stopping, only one American mother had as many as two children. The little girl of a one-child mother innocently inquired if the mother with two children was an American.

In the period previous to 1700 1.8 or less than 2 per cent. of the wives had only one child, while in 1870 to 1879, 18.6 per cent. of the wives had only one child. On the other hand, previous to 1700, 24.3 per cent. of the wives had families of ten or more children, but by 1870 to 1879 the corresponding per cent. was only 0.37.

As a result of these most significant changes in native American families, it necessarily follows that the average number of children per wife has decreased, as is clearly shown in Table I.

The age at marriage was noted of 2,252 brides and the average age of these by chronological periods was as follows:

TABLE IV.
AGE OF BRIDES AT MARRIAGE.

Period.	Number of Brides.	Aggregate of the Ages.	Average Age at Marriage.
Previous to 1700.....	30	642	21.4
1700-1749.....	147	3,196	21.7
1750-1799.....	284	6,236	22.0
1800-1849.....	969	21,617	22.3
1850-1869.....	633	14,512	22.9
1870-1879.....	189	4,374	23.1

These figures are significant of the change that has taken place in the average age at marriage. They indicate that the American bride of today is approximately two years older, on an average, than the American bride of the seventeenth century. The increase in the average age has apparently been quite gradual throughout the period under observation. A confirmation of the increasing average age of brides is found in the Massachusetts returns over a long period of years. The decline in the birth-rate of American wives cannot, however, be explained away by this average increase in the age at marriage. Granting that the period of fecundity is limited and that two years lost is an important item, it obviously is not sufficient to account for a decline in the average number of births per wife from 7.37 to 2.77.

The statistics here brought together present an awful indictment against the morals of the Americans of today. France has long been an example to the world of the Malthusian doctrines carried to an extreme, but the United States today presents a spectacle, in this respect, which it is doubtful if France can equal. In the United States, the native stock which should take some pride in its own perpetuation is rapidly dwindling to mere nothingness, while the triumphant immigrants are submerging it by sheer force of their greater virility as revealed in their much higher birth-rates.

If the genealogical records teach anything, it is this, that unless a radical change is effected very soon, the stock which founded this nation and which nurtured it through the grave perils and trials of the formative period, will soon have vanished

from the face of the earth. Unless a radical change is soon effected the historian of no far distant period will be compelled to say that the descendants of the colonizers of the United States preferred material luxuries to spiritual realities, lustful conceits to correct theories of life, and selfish gratifications of inordinate ambitions to unselfish acceptance of the duties of parenthood. It is a very real condition and not a mere theory that now confronts the native element of the population of this republic, and Mr. Roosevelt has sounded no false alarm in his vigorous preachments against race suicide.

TABLE A.

STATISTICS OF BIRTHS COMPILED FROM TWENTY-TWO GENEALOGICAL RECORDS OF AMERICAN FAMILIES.

Number of Children per Wife.	Previous to 1700.		1700-1749.		1750-1799.		1800-1849.		1850-1869.		1870-1879.	
	Number of Wives.	Per Cent. of Total.	Number of Wives.	Per Cent. of Total.	Number of Wives.	Per Cent. of Total.	Number of Wives.	Per Cent. of Total.	Number of Wives.	Per Cent. of Total.	Number of Wives.	Per Cent. of Total.
None.....	5	1.81	14	1.75	37	1.88	225	4.07	181	5.91	88	8.10
1.....	5	1.81	33	4.11	98	4.98	446	7.96	428	13.98	202	18.60
2.....	11	3.99	56	6.98	118	6.00	657	11.88	625	20.41	265	24.40
3.....	9	3.26	46	5.74	133	6.76	749	13.54	545	17.80	210	19.34
4.....	11	3.99	60	7.48	184	9.36	700	12.66	447	14.60	147	13.53
5.....	29	10.51	70	8.73	214	10.89	639	11.55	283	9.24	77	7.09
6.....	34	12.32	92	11.47	204	10.38	559	10.11	211	6.89	51	4.70
7.....	26	9.42	101	12.59	195	9.92	402	7.29	149	4.87	22	2.03
8.....	47	17.03	85	10.60	216	10.99	367	6.64	81	2.64	11	1.01
9.....	32	11.59	66	8.23	181	9.21	284	5.13	40	1.31	9	0.83
10.....	29	10.51	55	6.86	148	7.53	218	3.94	35	1.14	4	0.37
11.....	19	6.88	48	5.99	119	6.05	142	2.57	18	0.59	.....	.....
12.....	11	3.99	37	4.61	41	2.09	75	1.36	7	0.23	.....	.....
13.....	4	1.45	18	2.24	46	2.34	37	0.67	7	0.23	.....	.....
14.....	3	1.08	12	1.50	14	0.71	17	0.31	2	0.07	.....	.....
15.....	.....	.....	4	0.50	10	0.51	5	0.09	2	0.07	.....	.....
16.....	1	0.36	2	0.25	2	0.10	5	0.09	1	0.03	.....	.....
17.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	0.10	4	0.07	.....	.....	.....	.....
18.....	.....	.....	1	0.12	3	0.15	3	0.05	.....	.....	.....	.....
19.....	.....	.....	2	0.25	1	0.05	1	0.02	.....	.....	.....	.....
Total.....	276	100.00	802	100.00	1,966	100.00	5,530	100.00	3,062	100.00	1,086	100.00

SUMMARY.

0-2.....	21	7.61	103	12.84	253	12.86	1,322	23.91	1,234	40.30	555	51.10
3-5.....	49	17.76	176	21.95	531	17.01	2,088	37.75	1,275	41.64	434	39.96
6-9.....	139	50.36	344	42.89	796	40.50	1,613	29.17	481	15.71	93	8.57
10 and over .	67	24.27	179	22.32	386	19.63	507	9.17	72	2.36	4	0.37

TABLE B.
NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER WIFE.

STATISTICS COMPILED FROM TWENTY-TWO GENEALOGICAL RECORDS OF AMERICAN FAMILIES.

Children per Wife.	Previous to 1700.		1700-1749.		1750-1799.		1800-1849.		1850-1869.		1870-1879.	
	Number of Wives.	Aggregate Number of Children.	Number of Wives.	Aggregate Number of Children.	Number of Wives.	Aggregate Number of Children.	Number of Wives.	Aggregate Number of Children.	Number of Wives.	Aggregate Number of Children.	Number of Wives.	Aggregate Number of Children.
None.....	5	0	14	0	37	0	225	0	181	0	88	0
1.....	5	5	33	33	98	98	440	440	428	428	202	202
2.....	11	22	56	112	118	236	657	1,314	625	1,250	265	530
3.....	9	27	46	138	133	399	749	2,247	545	1,635	210	630
4.....	11	44	60	240	184	536	700	2,800	447	1,788	147	588
5.....	29	145	70	350	214	1,070	639	3,195	283	1,415	77	385
6.....	34	204	92	552	204	1,224	559	3,354	211	1,266	51	306
7.....	26	182	101	707	195	1,365	403	2,821	149	1,043	22	154
8.....	47	376	85	680	216	1,728	367	2,936	81	648	11	88
9.....	32	288	66	594	181	1,629	284	2,556	40	360	9	81
10.....	29	290	55	550	148	1,480	218	2,180	35	350	4	40
11.....	19	209	48	528	119	1,309	142	1,562	18	198	.....	.....
12.....	11	132	37	444	41	492	75	900	7	84	.....	.....
13.....	4	52	18	234	46	598	37	481	7	91	.....	.....
14.....	3	42	12	168	14	196	17	238	2	28	.....	.....
15.....	.....	.....	4	60	10	150	5	75	2	30	.....	.....
16.....	1	16	2	32	2	32	5	80	1	16	.....	.....
17.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	34	4	68	.....	.....	.....	.....
18.....	.....	.....	1	18	3	54	3	54	.....	.....	.....	.....
19.....	.....	.....	2	38	1	19	1	19	.....	.....	.....	.....
Total.....	276	2,034	802	5,478	1,966	12,649	5,530	27,320	3,062	10,630	1,086	3,004
Average num- ber of chil- dren per wife.....	7.37		6.83		6.43		4.94		3.47		2.77	